to another representation of a common wood lath wall. With this gambit Bryan puts the entire scenario in more than one place and time, and everything else in the painting supports this bizarre simultaneity, from the faded pastel colors of the late 19th century to the tumbling figure's untied Converse sneakers that play off another figure's wooden clogs.

Two of the canvases use multivalent, almost animated depictions of vinyl LPs as a kind of visual marker for the artist's refusal to honor usual limits of time and space in favor of keeping those realms open for repeated sampling. In *Spiral Scratch,* numerous albums are scattered in the corner of a nondescript room, with some of their labels impastoed. In *DJ Delicious*, the albums become both abstract paintings-in-the-painting and the protagonists of the overall action as they "escape" the clutches of an oblivious (and just geeky enough) DJ, who is whistling down a desolate sidewalk behind, no doubt, a club with a style so old it's hip.

TERRY R. MYERS

NANCY MONK

MADE IN PASADENA

CRAIG KRULL GALLERY

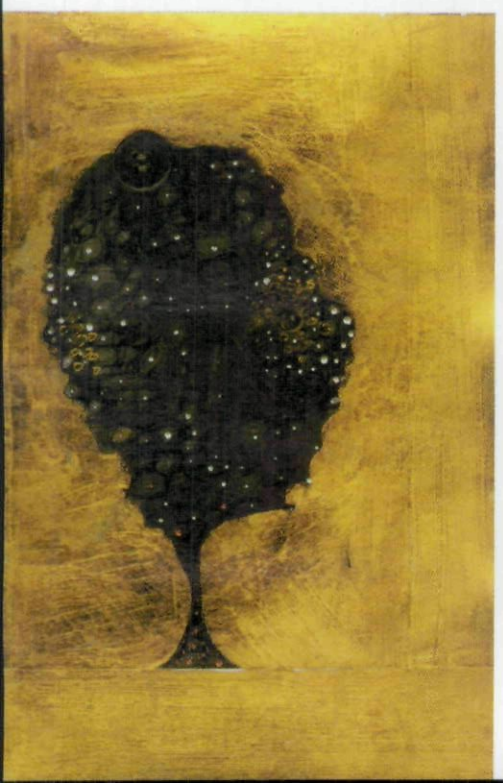
JULY 15–AUGUST 19

Los Angeles artist Nancy Monk does a lot with a little. *Made in Pasadena* includes scores of prints, paintings, and a few sculptures, most of intimate scale and a reserved, earthy palette. The works share a relatively restrained vocabulary in terms of media (buttons, gold leaf, birchwood, acrylic paint, found photography) and imagery (various stylistic schemes depicting flowers and trees). Within these limitations Monk crafts a multiplicity of recombinant forms and compositions that operate both as powerful individual works and as an ambitious installation. Visiting the exhibition is like a leisurely nature walk during which one pays heightened attention to details along the way: the patterned surface of a rock, the glint of light off a brook, the wormholes in leaves, the congealed ooze of sap on tree bark. Despite having studied in Minnesota and Colorado, Monk's sense of place is now inextricably linked to life in Southern California, both inside and outside the studio. In these and previous works she retains a level of ecological awareness that competes with her observation of urban existence.

Because she's always changing the way she uses materials, Monk is able to deploy a very few forms across a variety of surfaces to great effect. The archival print *Tree #3, rough* (2005) explores how flattening the picture plane effects the objecthood of a collage. Its pale wood tones and ashen leaves—midsize spots clustered along their edges in stylized infestation—both honor and dismiss its organic inspiration. *Tree #18, dark* (2005), from the same series, pictures four woody plant stems heavy with flowers, silhouetted in half-light. Its forms are built from passages of rich surfaces more like watercolor than collage, with nebulous swirls rather than placed shapes and milky, molten coloration that seems slightly beyond the artist's complete control.

Dark Tree and *Dark Tree #2* (both 2005) are two small mixed-media paintings. These and others in this subseries make liberal use of gold leaf, deeply scored and cross-hatched, then swathed in a rough skin of black paint and embedded with antique buttons—a common element in this group of works that serves as a persistent sign of the role of craft in mediating Monk's homage to the natural world. Her deliberate juxtaposition of the natural with the mechanical resonates with the strange way nature and culture interact in the irrigated-desert metropolis of LA. In *Made in Pasadena*, Monk exposes herself as both a manipulator of nature and its biggest fan.

SHANA NYS DAMBROT



NANCY MONK
***DARK TREE*, 2005**
MIXED MEDIA, ACRYLIC AND GOLD LEAF ON PHOTOGRAPH, 7 3/4 X 5 1/2 IN
COURTESY CRAIG KRULL GALLERY, LOS ANGELES

SAMUEL ROY-BOIS
***GHETTO*, 2006**
WOOD, PLEXIGLAS, FIBERGLASS, PAINT, ELECTRIC LIGHTING, AND MIXED MEDIA, 55 7/8 X 79 7/8 X 72 IN
PHOTO: GUY L'HEUREUX
COURTESY MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN, MONTREAL

MONTREAL

SAMUEL ROY-BOIS

IMPROBABLE AND RIDICULOUS

MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN

MAY 27–AUGUST 20

Twin uninhabitable, rotating houses and a public bedroom wherein viewers could kick off their shoes—and then some—were a welcome introduction to the subversive thinking of Samuel Roy-Bois. The enticingly absurd in situ architectural works of the Quebec-born, Brooklyn-based artist throw the viewer for a proverbial loop, seducing both kinesthetically and psychologically.

The installation *Satellites* (2006) consisted of two 10-foot-square architectural modules made of untreated two-by-fours and plywood that began to rotate clockwise when one entered the gallery. These rooms-within-rooms had no doors, only large windows that allowed one to peer within at their barren interiors: neon lighting, austere drywall, and bare carpet. What seemed at first to be unprepossessing, starkly conventional structures soon morphed into something alien and ambiguous. The rooms almost touched at their corners as they rotated, enhancing an air of danger and pushing viewers away from the work toward the perimeter of the room, so they had to strain in from all angles at the outer edges. The other installation, *Ghetto* (2006), consisted of a small, simple, houselike structure with a mattress covering the entire floor. A label read, "Please Remove Your Shoes Before Entering." Once inside, what to do? The door could be locked from the inside, and a couple I stumbled upon under the dirty coverlet hadn't even bothered to do that. Far from pristine and decidedly spare, this white box with its wide window was a voyeur's wet dream and suggested the untidy slums in any country worldwide, post globalization. Unlike *Satellites*, wherein the spectator was the earnest Peeping Tom, *Ghetto* entreated us to enter inside it and be the object of the gaze, to experience the sensation of being other. Once inside, the discomfort of extremely claustrophobic surroundings was amplified by a fear of being seen in such a compromised state, and state of mind.

Roy-Bois's work invokes Freud's notion of the uncanny, and is a cousin of the creations of artists such as Mike

Nelson and Gregor Schneider (particularly the latter's *Dead House ur*, an architectural work in progress). Fraught with paradoxes and inducing a sense of discomfort and marginalization, it suggests both the places we inhabit daily and French thinker Marc Augé's parenthetic nonplaces. In making the viewer both object and agent of the gaze, Roy-Bois induces a certain salutary self-consciousness concerning our symbiotic relationship with the architectural world. Both installations here implicated the viewer as voyeur, and, in their mirroring of our architectural environment, questioned the conventions and vicissitudes of urban living.

JAMES D. CAMPBELL

LONDON

ALBERT OEHLEN

WHITECHAPEL GALLERY

JULY 7–SEPTEMBER 3

"As long as painting's refutation can still take the form of painting, painting has not been refuted," Albert Oehlen said a dozen years ago. In his art the dissection table and the birthing bed are one, resulting in some uncanny double-imaging. *Untitled* (1988)—an example of the German artist's consciously methodical early experiments in parachuting primaries and metallic tones onto muddy grounds—hustles forth figurative fragments such as a pair of legs outlined in the Rastafarian tricolor of green, red, and yellow and an outline resembling a cat's head alongside raw loops and smears of dirty color. In its systematic quoting and merging of incongruent painterly styles, this painting was a rhetorical barb at the time of its making. And it still resonates. Obviously, its world of rampant interbreeding is the one we continue to live in; but unlike, say, Fiona Rae's contemporaneous fusions, Oehlen's work is keyed to a holistic conception of painting and a fan's love of the medium's mysteries. Its clangorous intersections are too violent and complicated to lose their appeal.

That's a trick pulled off repeatedly in the downstairs room of Oehlen's partial retrospective (continued, a month after this show's closure and with emphasis on his computer-based works, at Bristol's Arnolfini). The show does not include Oehlen's deliberately crude and punky early '80s paintings—of which Martin Kippenberger approvingly noted that "it's not possible to paint worse than that"—beginning instead with his work of the late-'80s and continuing to the present day, consequently demonstrating an extraordinary consistency of gut-punching effect despite numerous stylistic left turns. In its figurative guises, his work has orbited around images of violence and, one might hazard, evil. In 1999, for instance, Oehlen made *Titanium Cat with Laboratory Animal*, a blurry, nightmarish sketch of grim dominion in which two grotesque, bug-eyed heads emerge from a smeared grey ground. *Gerüstbau*

ALBERT OEHLEN
***GERUSTBAU*, 2000**
OIL ON CANVAS, 94 1/2 X 94 1/2 IN
THE FRANK COHEN COLLECTION
COURTESY WHITECHAPEL GALLERY, LONDON

(Scaffolding), executed a year later, features what looks like a buzz saw descending on the cranium of a terrified figure while all manner of queasy painterly effects swim over the picture plane. Abstraction, in these paintings, has become something akin to an obfuscating and pressuring fog. It's as figurative as the changeable air around us.

If process is Oehlen's safety net, there appears to be a point where he reverts to a primal mind-set—a system of preconscious decisions pertaining to imagistic density and intensity. When he works with found imagery, as he often does, the crucial sweet point is hit when a comparatively innocuous or known image is raised out of its sphere of reference and charged with unlikely portent. He does that over and over here. An example: in *Eye in...*(2005), which advertises his interest in Surrealism, a large photocopy of the famous eye from Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's *Un Chien Andalou* hovers (dead-looking, though unsliced) in a rich blue sky smeared with fecal brown, over a white landscape ridged with perspective lines. Everything in this painting is obvious; except, that is, for how its nerve-jangling yet sensuous cumulative effect transpires. That not-knowing, you suspect, goes for Oehlen too. Inevitably, it semaphores one thing: painting has not been refuted.

MARTIN HERBERT

IGOR AND SVETLANA KOPYSTIANSKY

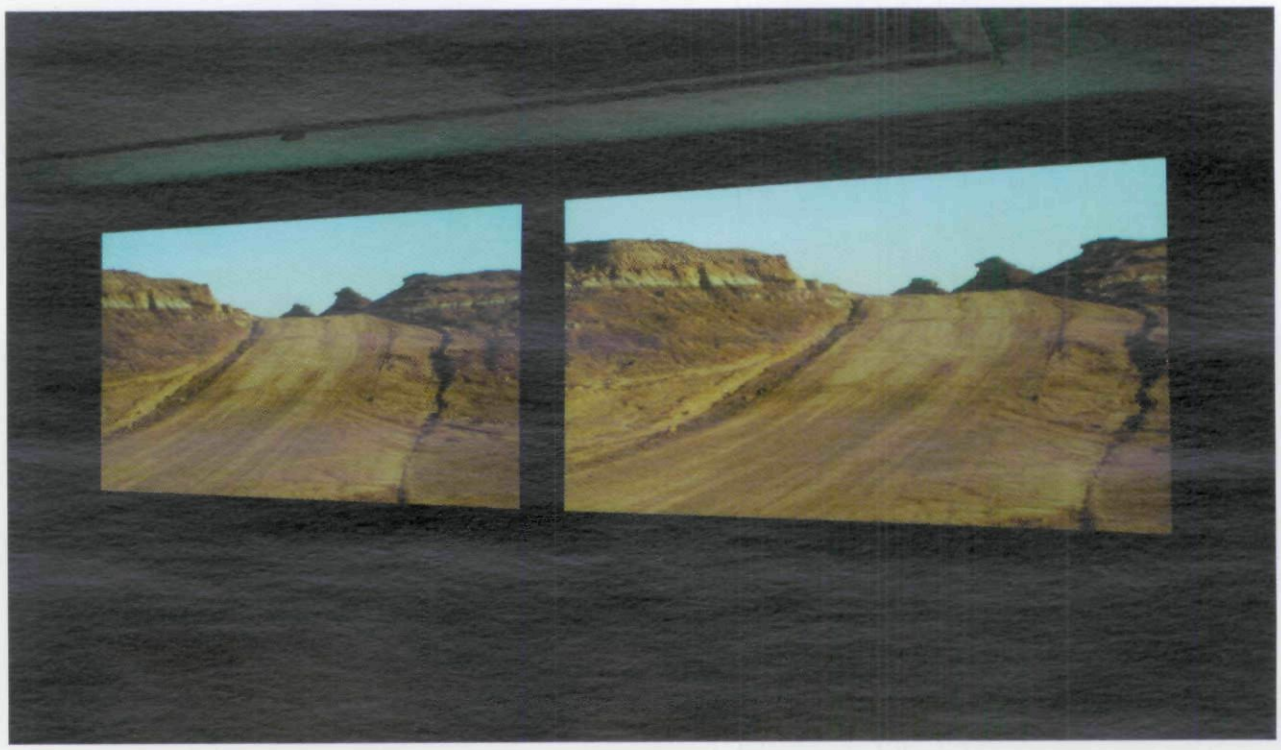
LISSON GALLERY

JULY 7–AUGUST 19

The Russian artists Igor and Svetlana Kopystiansky's photographs and videos are composed of images so spare and languorous that they're radical in their restraint. In the duo's exhibition at Lisson Gallery, videos unfold so slowly we wait patiently for momentous signs that may or may not arrive.

In *Sandglass (Establishing Shot II)* (2005), two silent projections each show a pair of abandoned broken-down cars sitting with their hoods open before a sheet of rock in the middle of the desert. The landscape is bleak and lonely, and after a while we realize that the nearly identical images are moving very slightly. Through this surprisingly hypnotic gesture we're pulled into a scene of unexplained misfortune at what appears to be the end of the road.

This elaborate understatement requires an exceptional faith in the viewers' patience, a belief in our willingness to follow narratives that don't provide clear answers. *Sandglass (Establishing Shot I)* (2005) consists of two images of the Arizona desert (projected side by side on a wall). In each, the camera pans the landscape with unbelievable slowness; eventually they converge before passing in another long circle. Here the Kopystianskys explore the subjective truths inherent in the deceptive authority of photography. It's not truth that the camera reveals, we are reminded, but the illusion of truth. »



IGOR AND SVETLANA KOPYSTIANSKY
***SANDGLASS (ESTABLISHING SHOT II)*, 2005**
TWO-CHANNEL VIDEO PROJECTION (SILENT), DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
PHOTO: DAVE MORGAN
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND LISSON GALLERY, LONDON

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